

Mr. Webb, Dr. Seamans, Members and Guests of the NASA organization, Ladies and Gentlemen -- I am grateful for the privilege of participation with you today in this awards program marking the seventh anniversary of the beginning of this fine organization.

There is a considerable amount of nostalgia involved in my now infrequent visits to your Headquarters. I don't often have an opportunity to see the good people with whom I had the pleasure of working as we were getting this program under way. It is good to be with you again. And it is good to note the new faces among this group -- faces of those who have joined the veterans to combine their efforts in moving this nation's space program into the position of leadership which it now so clearly occupies. It is fitting that we should be gathered here to recognize publicly the unusual efforts and accomplishments of those individuals and groups of individuals who by their leadership, devotion and the expenditure of their energies in an effective manner have made an unusual contribution to the NASA program. Theirs has been a record of service above and beyond the call of duty. To borrow from our friends and colleagues in the military services -- theirs has been a performance in the best traditions of this young and vigorous organization.

Some years ago, I came upon a statement first published by one of our great corporations in 1915 entitled -- The Penalty of Leadership. I want to quote from that statement which seems to me so appropriate to our purposes today.

"In every field of human endeavor, he that is first must perpetually live in the white light of publicity. Whether the leadership be vested in a man or in a manufactured product, emulation and envy are ever at work. In art, in literature, in music, in industry, the reward and punishment are always the same. The reward is widespread recognition; the punishment fierce denial and detraction. When a man's work becomes a standard for the whole world, it also becomes a target for the shafts of the envious few. If his work be merely mediocre, he will be left severely alone -- if he achieves a masterpiece, it will set a million tongues a-wagging. Whatsoever you write, or paint, or play, or sing, or build, no one will strive to surpass or to slander you, unless your work be stamped with the seal of genius.

"Long, long after a great work or a good work has been done, those who are disappointed or envious continue to cry out that it cannot be done. Spiteful little voices in the domain of art were raised against our own Whistler as a mountebank, long after the big world had acclaimed him as its greatest artistic genius. Multitudes flocked

to Bayreuth to worship at the musical shrine of Wagner, while the little group of those whom he had dethroned and displaced argued angrily that he was no musician at all.

"The little world continued to protest that Fulton could never build a steamboat, while the big work flocked to the riverbanks to see his boat steam by.

"The leader is assailed because he is a leader and the effort to equal him is merely added proof of that leadership. Failing to equal or to excel the follower seeks to depreciate or destroy -- but only confirms once more the leadership of that which he strives to supplant.

"There is nothing new in this. It is as old as the world and as old as human passions -- envy, fear, greed, ambition, and the desire to surpass. And it all avails nothing. If the leader truly leads, he remains-- The Leader. Master-Poet, Master-Painter, Master-Workman, each in his turn is assailed, and each holds his laurels through the ages. That which is good or great makes itself known, no matter how loud the clamor of denial. That which deserves to live -- Lives."

(END OF QUOTE)

There words seem to me particularly appropriate to the purpose of this assemblage. We honor today these men and these units of the organization whose leadership qualities have set them apart. Theirs has been no easy task -- and there have been times during the past seven years when they have felt the lash of carping and usually irresponsible criticism. But true to their faith, and with support of so many others, they have pushed on to the goals they set for themselves as they moved toward the larger goals of the organization set by others. These men and organizational units of distinction would be the first to say that they could not have achieved the results we honor today without the help of many others.

The early days of NASA were marked by the pulling together of a National Space Program out of government agencies, the aerospace industry, and the scientific community. Many agencies have been created over the years, but none have involved the transfer of as many units and programs of other departments as were involved in the creation of NASA. The nucleus of NASA was the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA). Dr. Hugh Dryden who was then Director of NACA became Deputy Administrator of NASA -- a post he still holds -- at the same time I became Administrator. Together with Dr. Abe Silverstein, he pulled together a small, select group of NACA's best space-oriented people.

I am gratified that NASA still has the skills of these and other able and dedicated men and women. With a history of 43 years of success in the fields of aeronautical research and technology, NACA was a logical starting point for the new agency. More than 8,000 NACA personnel were transferred to NASA in 1958, and with its excellent laboratories at Langley, Ames, Lewis, and the Flight Research Center at Edwards, California we made our start. Putting together an agency and a program back in 1958 to probe the secrets of space made heavy demands on institutions and people. I can say with a great deal of personal pride that those people and institutions rose to the challenges magnificently. I know you take this same pride in carrying the space program forward today with all of its many and broad implications.

The impact of the space age on our nation's affairs, domestic and international, has been far-reaching. Communications, weather forecasting, medicine, materials research, and engineering have felt the stimulus of our space effort. Space has made demands on our educational system, our management and industrial resources, and our scientific community on a scale unparalleled in history.

The management of this great effort reflects the skill and dedication of Mr. Webb, Dr. Seamans, Dr. Dryden and many others. I salute each of you with admiration for the job you have been doing. Mine was the relatively easy task of putting together an organization. Yours has been the much more difficult task of making good the promises we held out, at times so naively, to the Congress and the people of this nation and the world. But handling these heavy responsibilities cannot be the duty of just one man, or a small group of men at the top.

NASA's annual budget of more than 5 billion dollars, its vast relationships with thousands of industry contractors and sub-contractors, its liaison with America's universities and laboratories, puts demands on every member of the NASA government team. This Agency's success attests to the skill with which NASA employees have been and are carrying out their jobs. Those who we honor here today know full well the debt they owe to everybody else in the organization; nevertheless, the honor of receiving these NASA awards is particularly theirs. They have set a pace for others to follow and standards against which others can take their measure. To all of you and to the thousands of NASA people working at their tasks at whatever location throughout this nation and the world, I am proud to say -- well done! And I am confident that the hard won leadership position you have attained will be maintained throughout the years ahead.

Thank you.